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ABSTRACT

Site-based management (SBM) could change schools by altering the scope of authority, involvement, and influence to lessen dominance relationships in education and inequities regarding struggling students. These dominance relationships exist between administrators and staff and between staff and students. SBM seems to signal a paradigm shift from a functionalist governance structure to a more interpretivist-based one. Even critical theory concerns are addressed in changes in authority, expansion of participant influence, and increased diversity of participants. A multiple-paradigm framework can be used to examine the assumptions and practices of SBM found in empirical and conceptual literature. This analysis suggests that SBM may not lead to radical change in educational decision making. However, if implemented correctly, SBM has the potential to represent the interpretivist or critical paradigm. Empirical data suggest that frequently SBM is a manipulated version of functionalist practices. (Contains 36 references.) (Author/JPT)

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Deconstructing site-based management: Possibilities for emancipation and alternative means of control

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Abstract

Much of the literature suggests that site-based management could be a vehicle to produce radical change in schools via changes in the scope of authority, scope of involvement, and scope of influence that alleviate dominance relationships of administrators over staff, staff over students, and the differential and inequitable effects of policies and practices toward those students who typically struggle in school. In doing so, site-based management seems to signal a paradigm shift from a governance structure rooted in functionalist assumptions to a more interpretivist-based structure. Even concerns from critical theory are represented in the potential devolution of authority, expansion of participant influence, and increased diversity of participants. Surface appearances, however, may not reflect the reality of practice.

This analysis uses a multiple paradigm framework to examine the assumptions and practices of site-based management as reflected in empirical and conceptual literature. Our analysis suggests that assuming that radical change will occur as a result of SBM may be assuming too much. The analysis discusses that if implemented and practiced in certain ways, and with certain results, SBM has the potential to represent the interpretivist or critical paradigm. Empirical data, however, suggests that frequently SBM is simply a manipulative refinement of practices grounded in the functionalist paradigm. Ultimately, the most enlightening judgement we are able to render regarding the paradigm grounding of SBM is, "It depends...".

Deconstructing site-based management:

Possibilities for emancipation and alternative means of control

Recent years have seen increasing attention to the concept of site-based management. The stimulus for widespread discussion, adoption and implementation of site-based management was the recommendation of the Carnegie Foundation's report, A Nation Prepared (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986), that teachers be increasingly involved in school decision making. Initially attention focused on efforts in Dade County, Florida; Rochester, New York; Hammond, Indiana; and several other sites, but more recently many additional school districts and even some entire states (e.g., Kentucky) have implemented site-based management plans.

Even though there has been widespread popular attention to site-based management (SBM) and a seeming willingness on the part of many legislators, school boards, and other policy makers to encourage or mandate its usage, a variety of conceptions and misconceptions of SBM exist. Although SBM has been reviewed and critiqued (David, 1989; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1991; Scheurich, 1992), reviews have found little empirical research on the topic. Malen and colleagues critiqued the practice and implementation of SBM for failing to live up to its promises as a reform strategy. Scheurich (1992) also critiqued the practice of SBM, but questioned the legitimacy of SBM as a policy initiative for all schools. We join these voices of SBM critique. Our analysis,

however, unlike previous critiques, reframes the SBM literature along three continua, and these continua are positioned against a multiple paradigm theoretical framework. In this way, our critique moves beyond reviews which measure SBM practice against SBM rhetoric. Our critique also examines the empirical literature and SBM practices, but, in addition, the theoretical framework allows us to probe the epistemological and philosophical assumptions of SBM as well. Rather than repeating a comprehensive review of the literature, we analyze other scholars' reviews. Consequently, we can specifically screen the SBM assumptions and practices using the paradigm lenses of structural functionalism, interpretivism, and critical theory. Before doing so, we describe the primary elements and assumptions of SBM which revolve around scope of authority, scope of involvement, and scope of influence.

Elements and Assumptions of Site-Based Management

The primary objective of site-based management is to "bring about significant change in educational practice" (David, 1989, p. 45) by providing school staffs sufficient autonomy from external regulation to modify and restructure services mandated from above. Additionally, site-based management is intended to alleviate the morale-diminishing and effort-reducing effect of strong central control (David, 1989). Our review of the literature, specifically the work of Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz

(1991), suggests that site-based management can be framed along three interrelated, yet distinct continua: scope of authority, scope of involvement, and scope of influence (see Figure 1). Our framework suggests that these continua range from practices

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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grounded in the structural functionalist paradigm to practices grounded in the critical theory paradigm. We discuss these paradigms in the next section; first, we describe the three continua.

Scope of authority. In its simplest form, site-based management is the devolution of decision-making authority from the district level to the individual school site. Referred to as "the degree of discretion afforded by the web of rules embedded in the broader system" (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1991, p. 301), authority of the site-based management council varies in actual practice and can be viewed along two continua: the degree of discretion provided along a continuum of least to the most devolution of authority, and, external constraints which can limit the degree of discretion regardless of the extent of devolution of authority. In some schools and districts, the site council's decision is merely advisory. In other cases the principal retains veto power. Moving along the continuum, occasionally district administration may veto decisions. Moving

toward greater devolution of authority, in some instances the decision of the school-site council is binding. The greatest scope of authority occurs when any group represented in the site council (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents) may reject a decision.

Regardless of the degree of devolution of authority, however, authority can be constrained by external factors. For example, in some districts, authority is constrained by district initiatives, policies, contracted agreements, and federal and state legislation. Some districts loosen the constraints suggested by district initiatives, but continue to demand that councils be guided by district policies, employee contracts, and federal and state legislation. Still other districts require adherence only to state and federal legislation. Finally, some districts seek waivers from selected state and federal regulations, to provide broad latitude in decisions. For example, some schools seek a lift on restrictions related to personnel and funding associated with Chapter I and special education programs, to ensure that all students in the school benefit.

Scope of involvement. Scope of involvement in site-based management is based on two assumptions of organizational practice. First, it assumes that organizational members closest to the core functions of the organization are best able to make optimal decisions regarding organizational action that are

responsive to the specific local context in which they are employed (David, 1989; Hill & Bonan, 1991). In schools this implies that principals and teachers are better able to make decisions affecting the individual school than district-level personnel, with teachers more capable of making quality decisions affecting curriculum and instruction than school-site or district-level administrators. Second, SBM is based on the assumption that organizational members will put forth greater effort, perform better, and "buy into" organizational goals and purpose if they have been integrally involved in making organizational decisions (David, 1989; Hill & Bonan, 1991). Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz (1991) refer to this aspect of SBM, as "how authority is distributed among site participants" (p. 328).

Four philosophies underlie the continuum of scope of involvement in site-based management which inform who is to be involved in decision making (Kirst, 1990). Under the philosophy of principal as site manager, the principal makes site decisions and controls school resources. Consequently, although participation of teachers in decisions made at the school site is generally associated with site-based management, strictly speaking, principals could retain site decision-making authority without involving teachers. A second philosophy positions teachers at the center of making school-level decisions via a school-site council. Teacher members of the decision-making group represent the remaining teachers in the school who are not

in the group and, ideally, solicit their input. Under the third philosophy, lay control is exercised in which parents and community members along with teachers, through the mechanism of school-site councils make school-level decisions. The fourth form along the continuum of scope of involvement is informed by the philosophy of parity. In this philosophy teachers, administrators, parents and, in some cases, students are represented on a school-site council with all groups having parity.

Scope of influence. Areas over which school sites have discretion, or to what authority is delegated (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1991) also vary from one SBM project to another from least to most influence. The scope of influence related to the categories or types of decisions within the school site can vary, but budgeting, personnel, and program have been often cited as areas in which schools have been granted autonomy, and are used to measure scope of influence. In some districts, decisions may be only peripherally related to budget, personnel, and program. Other councils may only have discretion over one or two of the three major decision-making areas. In other districts, site councils are encouraged to "manage" the budget, personnel, and program, but scope of influence within decision areas remains limited. For example, at some sites budgeting decisions may be restricted to how to allocate funds not devoted to personnel and building maintenance costs--a marginal portion of the school

budget. In other cases, site councils have broad latitude and may make decisions such as hiring several instructional aides in lieu of an additional teacher, or may develop maintenance cost-cutting measures and divert maintenance funds to other functions. Those site councils with the greatest degree of influence may be empowered to substantially alter all aspects of the school.

In sum, site-based management has been proposed as a process for not merely tinkering with, but rather, for systemically restructuring schools. Based on the literature, site-based management may be framed in terms of three continua: scope of authority, scope of involvement, and scope of influence. These continua can range from rather traditional, hierarchical decision-making practices to practices significantly oriented toward power sharing. To better understand these continua, we propose a multiparadigm theoretical framework as one way to analyze SBM.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual and theoretical framework for this analysis is grounded in the work of Sirotnik and Oakes (1986), and Foster (1986), whose work is derived, in part, from Burrell and Morgan (1979). Their approach is oriented along two axes. One axis represents a continuum of the nature of science from objectivity to subjectivity. The other axis represents a continuum of the nature of society, from the sociology of regulation to the

sociology of radical change. These axes form four paradigms: structural functional, interpretivist, radical structuralist, and radical humanist. Sirotnik and Oakes, and Foster suggest that the radical structuralist and radical humanist paradigms could be subsumed under an all encompassing critical theory paradigm.[1]

Structural functionalism. Structural functionalism is oriented toward regulating and maintaining current social order. It views reality as being unitary in nature, and, having a singular, objective and, stable order to which society must conform. In addition, the structural functionalist paradigm suggests that ". . . the social world is composed of relatively concrete empirical artifacts and relationships which can be identified, studied, and measured" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 26). Educational practice from a functionalist perspective is grounded in the assumption that since reality is singular and certain, it can be measured. Formally-derived knowledge is superordinant to individually-derived knowledge. Generalizations are context-free and universal. The objective of structural functionalist practice is to develop best practice solutions that may eventually become rules or laws for other settings. The implication of the structural functionalist paradigm is that standardization can take place (i.e., that standardized responses work in all contexts). Behavior is framed within a social order and structure that is viewed as pre-determined and inexorable.

It venerates the existence and worth of a single societal structure which should be regulated and sustained.

Interpretivism. Interpretivism is also oriented toward regulating and maintaining current social order. However, unlike structural functionalism, it views reality as multiple, subjectively constructed and thus, unstable. The individual's interpretation of society is of primary interest. Educational practice from an interpretivist perspective suggests that personal individual knowledge is superordinant to formally-derived knowledge. Generalizations are context-bound and inform understanding but are not universally generalizable. The objective of interpretivist practice is insight and understanding of contextually-specific situations with a recognition that multiple contingency solutions exist. Whereas the implication of the structural functionalist paradigm is that standardization can take place, the interpretivist paradigm believes in individualization (i.e., that different contexts require different responses). Nonetheless, interpretivism does not call into question the existence or value of a social order. As does structural functionalism, it venerates the existence, and worth of existing societal structures.

Critical theory. The critical theory paradigm is oriented toward creating social change. Critical theorists see individuals and groups as being oppressed by real or perceived structures in society. That is, people are prevented from

accessing knowledge and opportunity by real, tangible hurdles, or by their belief that such limits exist. According to Capper (in press) critical theory encompasses a concern for suffering and oppression; a critical view of education; leadership oriented toward empowerment and transformation; an emphasis on morals, values, and rationality; and a reliance on the intellect. Critical theory's hallmark is its unwavering drive to emancipate the oppressed and disenfranchised. Toward that end, critical theory relies on rational, logical, and reasonable thinking and discourse to help oppressed groups recognize, understand, and act against the sources of their oppression.

The SBM literature implies that it represents a paradigm shift from traditional forms of school governance. This analysis suggests that the continua which frame SBM: scope of authority, scope of involvement, and scope of influence, range from structural functionalist practices to practices grounded in critical theory. Accordingly, the legitimacy of SBM's implication of paradigm shift will be probed in this analysis. Analysis occurs both on a conceptual level as well as through an examination of SBM practices at sites for which empirical evidence exists.

Analysis and Discussion

Scopes of Authority, Involvement, and Influence: A Multiparadigm Overview

In traditional forms of school governance, it is the task of the designated leader to identify the best solution and, having done so, to insure that it becomes organizational practice. As such, it is the leader's responsibility to mandate or "sell" the solution to organizational members. Also, in traditional forms of school governance, since a capable leader competently fulfills the task of objectively identifying a singular mode of "best practice," it serves little purpose to solicit subjective membership opinion about what decision should be made or which course of action should be pursued.

In contrast, a central assumption of SBM along the continua of authority, involvement, and influence is that organizational members closest to the core functions of the organization are best able to make optimal decisions regarding organizational action that are responsive to the specific local context in which they are employed. This assumption counteracts traditional forms of school governance, grounded in structural functionalism, in which decisions are made or regulated by individuals at higher levels of the organizational hierarchy and imposed on individuals at lower levels. In sum, this assumption moves SBM along the continuum beyond the structural functionalist paradigm.

Consequently, this assumption related to the scopes of authority, involvement, and influence reflects the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm recognizes contextual complexity and specificity. Generalizable best solutions cannot be determined, but rather responses should be based on a current understanding of local conditions, past experience, and insights gleaned from the contextually-grounded, recorded experiences of others (e.g., from formal research that has been screened for contextual similarities and differences). Individuals construct perceptions and knowledge of the local context in multiple ways. While no two individuals experience the exact same local context, the contextual similarities of teachers' experiences are likely to be more similar than those of principals, with parent and student experiences providing two more contextual frameworks. By triangulating the interpretations of multiple groups and multiple members within groups, optimal decisions regarding organizational action, related to budget, personnel, and program, that are responsive to the specific local context are more likely to be made. Thus, this assumption grounding the scopes of authority, involvement, and influence could claim some roots in the interpretivist paradigm.

This assumption, however, could also claim some kinship with the critical theory paradigm. That is, recognizing that those persons closest to the core functions of the organization are best able to make optimal decisions, reflects some concern for

power, and it moves the decision-making power from the upper echelons of the hierarchy down to the "lower" levels. Further, this assumption states that these decisions would be responsive to the specific local context, which could make these decisions more attuned to the needs of those who traditionally struggle in schools. Accordingly, further along the continua of authority, involvement, and influence, SBM could be considered leaning toward social change. This assumption, however, leaves the goal of SBM unmentioned, and to chance. In contrast, critical theorists would specifically and deliberately ascribe a goal of social change to the practice of SBM. As such, without an overt commitment to social change, while SBM could signal a shift in power, in practice, it tends to align with principles associated with the interpretivist paradigm. In sum, autonomy from external regulation as a result of increased scopes of authority, involvement, and influence by stakeholders could reflect interpretive notions of the subjectivity of appropriate practice, and allude to critical notions of equitable relationships between various stakeholders.

Scope of authority: Probing further

Arguably, without a focus on social change, SBM is serving as an arena in which interpretivist paradigmatic assumptions of school governance are struggling with structural functionalist paradigmatic assumptions. An examination of SBM and related

reform literature suggests that there is great difficulty in shedding the assumptions and practices of traditional functionalist-based governance structures for assumptions and practices congruent with the more interpretivist grounding of site-based management. For example, policy analysts have noted a clear tension in the reform movement between initiatives that focus on functionalist notions of regulation and accountability (e.g., student, teacher, and administrator competency testing) and those that focus on interpretivist notions of decentralization and empowerment (e.g., shared decision making, site-based management; see e.g., Jacobson & Conway, 1990). In this section, we explore the functionalist/interpretivist tension of scope of authority by unpacking the intertwining relations related to scope of authority among a) the role of teachers, b) evaluation, c) the relationship between the school and the district, and d) implementation. From a critical theory perspective, this exploration reveals that scope of authority in SBM may be a not-so-subtle mask for control.

Scope of authority and the role of teachers. Depending on the scope of authority of site councils, the power of teachers to influence school decisions may actually be lessened as a result of site-based management. Although formally the scope of authority of site councils may range from advisory to binding, several factors may serve to alter formal authority. In some districts, oversight for individual schools is decentralized from

the district office to regional offices within the district. In effect, what may result is that such "decentralization" adds another supervisory level to the district hierarchy allowing closer scrutiny of site practices than previously. In Dade County, for example, staffs of site-managed schools reported increased vulnerability to central control and the need for a greater number of bureaucratic clearances subsequent to the establishment of regional offices (Collins & Hanson, 1991). Similar findings were cited by Chapman and Boyd (1986) in their study of Australian school decentralization.

An additional factor in increasing teacher vulnerability to district control under the guise of scope of authority is the impact of site-based management on teachers' unions. Ideally SBM involves a mutually cooperative arrangement in which schools receive waivers from selected provisions of teacher contracts and from specific district policies in order to facilitate greater innovation. The effects of contractual waivers and the mutually cooperative arrangement may weaken the power base of the union (Chapman & Boyd, 1986), leaving it unable to optimally respond to central control initiatives. McDonnell (1989) has cited a "reluctance to endorse professionalism reforms" on the part of teachers and attributed it to a "belief that concentrating on participatory reforms may distract them and their leaders from longer-standing efforts to improve basic working conditions" (p. 18). As a result, teachers may experience a "major increase in

workload" (Hill & Bonan, 1991, p. 21) because of the increased time involved in SBM without any real additional influence over decisions. Chapman & Boyd (1986) reported that teachers were "especially frustrated" when the increased work load was the result of SBM tasks which were mostly "clerical and general organizational work", (p. 44) and speculated that trading teaching preparation time for SBM work time might "diminish...the quality of education offered to the students" (p. 45).

Scope of authority and evaluation. Weiler (1990) has argued that evaluation and accountability with respect to decentralization initiatives such as site-based management can constrain the scope of authority in several respects. He noted that there is "a lack of consensus on the objectives of education" (p. 442), and thus the development of criteria for evaluating the performance of distinctively-developed educational organizations becomes suspect. Specifically, why should SBM sites be evaluated on criteria developed by district offices to match their (i.e., the districts') perception of school effectiveness when the objectives the site is trying to accomplish may differ significantly? A second problematic aspect of accountability and evaluation is the inherent contradiction between decentralization as a genuine delegation of power and, evaluation which is a functionalist intervention that serves as "an obvious and major instrument of control" (Weiler, 1990, p. 444).

Scope of authority and district/school tension. The authors of a recent RAND Corporation-sponsored study of SBM projects focus two of the book's five sections on a discussion of accountability practices (see Hill & Bonan, 1991). They waiver incongruously between functionalist recommendations for "universal standards"[2] (p. 70), accountability of school sites, and coordination among SBM sites through mechanisms such as standardized tests, and, interpretivist exhortations for distinctive school responses, and freedom from extensive rules and regulations. Similar paradigm incongruency is found in other SBM literature which advocates centralized controls within an intervention intended to achieve decentralization (e.g., Ferris, 1992; Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992). Wohlstetter and Odden (1992) recommend that, school districts implementing site-based management should set student outcome goals at the district office and join SBM policy with an "'instructional guidance mechanism'" (p. 541).

The inability to break out of functionalist paradigmatic assumptions related to scope of authority between districts and schools is also evident in empirical data from SBM projects. In Edmonton, Canada, restrictions placed on school sites required that they submit SBM plans which, "must fall within the general site-management framework established by the central office and must not contravene the district's educational goals" (Hill & Bonan, 1991, p. 81). In cases where school sites did not measure

up to external expectations, area superintendents were responsible for examining the problem and coming up with a solution.

In other districts site-based management was promoted at the same time that changes were being mandated in curriculum, instruction, and teacher work conditions (Hill & Bonan, 1991), (and without resource considerations). In British Columbia, at the same time that teachers were being given more responsibility for planning and organizing curriculum, the education ministry strengthened student testing and program evaluation, in essence narrowly prescribing decisions (Hargreaves, 1991b). In other settings formal structures of power may have been decentralized, but resources in the form of knowledge and data which allow participants to competently exercise formal power, remained centralized in district offices and principals (Chapman & Boyd, 1986; Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992).

In some districts, schools must apply to district governance for permission to become site managed, and in their applications describe specific programs or innovations they wish to implement through the use of site-based management. Hill and Bonan (1991) described the process used to select schools for SBM participation in Columbus, Ohio as follows: "Applications consisted primarily of a detailed school plan that noted deficiencies in the school and demonstrated how the school would use SBM...to address these problems" (p. 76). The process

implies that both problem and solution have been identified, thus retaining district control over scope of authority.

Scope of authority and SBM implementation. The implementation of SBM also points to the tension between structural functional and interpretivist positions related to scope of authority, when, in some instances, site-based management itself is mandated. For example, the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 mandates that by 1996 every school in the state must be site-based managed. There is an inherent incongruency between interpretivist-based assumptions that optimal decisions are responsive to local contextual conditions and best made as close to the source of action as possible and, a mandate based in functionalist assumptions that one course of action (i.e., site-based management) is best for all contexts.[3] Hargreaves (1991a; 1991b) terms this type of mandate, contrived collegiality, and argues that it is "not empowering but disempowering" (1991b, p. 19) and is a "reconstruction of bureaucratic control" (1991b, p. 20). He describes it as an intervention,

> Which is forced rather than facilitated, which meets the implementation needs of bureaucratic systems rather than the development needs of teachers and schools, which is designed to be administratively predictable rather than unpredictable in its outcomes (Hargreaves, 1991b, p. 19).

Scope of authority as a mask of control. Weiler (1990) argues that the tension between functionalist and interpretivist paradigmatic assumptions in scope of authority are not based on the inability to shed traditionally dominant assumptions, but rather are an effort by those in power to reconcile politically expedient decentralization strategies with retaining centralized control--what Smyth (1992) terms, "the rhetoric of devolution in a context of centralism" (p. 270). Weiler argues that in conflict-ridden environments, decentralization is a strategy by which central bureaucracies are able to "diffuse the sources of conflict and to provide additional layers of insulation between them and the rest of the system" (p. 440). Additionally, in an era where there has been a "delegitimation of authority" (p. 441), decentralization serves as a legitimation strategy by making monolithic organizations seem more responsive to their constituencies.

Weiler (1990) also observes that, "the notion of decentralization as redistribution of power seems largely incompatible with the manifest interests of the modern state in maintaining effective control" (p. 439). He argues that a "major challenge" (p. 442) of organizations using decentralization as a legitimation and conflict-diverting strategy is to retain centralized control while giving the appearance of being committed to decentralization. If Weiler's thesis is accepted as valid, decentralization efforts such as site-based management are

intended to give an illusion of decentralization without sacrificing control of key issues. If (or when) this is the case, it firmly grounds site-based management in a control-oriented functionalist paradigm.

Similarly, Hargreaves (1991b) has argued that decentralization and increasing the scope of authority is a management response dictated by postmodern societal conditions. Globally, he observes, we have seen a "resurgence of ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities" and of the voices of other groups "who have formerly been marginalized or dispossessed" (p. 10). One example in educational research is the work which reflects an emergent respect for the practical knowledge of teachers as represented in works on teacher cognition (see e.g., Clark & Peterson, 1986; Elbaz, 1981; Ross, Cornett & McCutchan, 1992), on narrative ways of knowing (e.g., Connolly & Clandinin, 1988) and other works that celebrate teacher voice. In educational institutions teacher voice has been reflected during recent decades in teacher unionization and other forms of resistance. The increasingly audible chorus of dissenting voices has resulted in a recognition that traditional-appearing, hegemonous, administrator-teacher relationships will no longer accomplish administratively-determined objectives. Consequently, subtler ways of influencing that give the appearance of autonomy and empowerment but in essence are manipulative and controlling have become necessary.

Hargreaves (1991a) has also observed that sometimes implementing site-based management is simply a way of ensuring implementation of centrally mandated interventions. If SBM is implemented for purposes of stimulating improved teacher productivity in the accomplishment of pre-ordained organizational goals, then, as previously described, it is grounded in the functionalist paradigm. Such action assumes that designated leaders should rationally determine best organizational goals and that their task is to insure that other organizational members pursue these goals. In this case implementing site-based decision making, is simply a subtler, more manipulative means of achieving higher productivity and "selling" prescriptive courses of organizational action.

Tensions specific to the critical theory paradigm and scope of authority. The critical theory paradigm adds an interesting twist to the scope of authority and the associated tension with evaluation, tensions between district and school control, and authority as a mask of control. If the central goal of the district administration was equity and justice, would districts be justified in facilitating the development of evaluation criteria by which the schools would be held accountable to this goal? Rather than developing criteria at the district level without school-level involvement, perhaps the district would facilitate this development with the school. Regardless of the development process, however, districts could be adamant about

establishing schools aimed toward equity and justice, and would expect schools to adopt similar goals and related objectives. For some, a goal of social justice might warrant tighter district control. In this scenario, would evaluation and district control, regardless of their "functionalist" grounding, be warranted? Pinning a paradigm label on such a scenario becomes problematic when the scope of authority is toward the functionalist side of the continuum, yet the goal is social change.

A critical theory goal of social change also confounds the thesis that increasing the scope of authority serves as a mask of control (Weiler, 1990). Accusing districts of maintaining an illusion of decentralization without sacrificing control of key issues thus maintaining their grounding in structural functionalism, could be confounded, and unclear, when the key issues to which the district hesitates to sacrifice control involve equity and justice.

Further, implementing site-based management as a way of ensuring implementation of centrally mandated interventions (Hargreaves, 1991) presents a third example, of how, from the critical theory perspective, it is often automatically assumed that centralized "control" and pre-ordained organization goals are not oriented toward equity and justice, and in fact, are oriented toward the perpetuation of traditional power structures. While this latter assumption may in fact be true for many

educational practices, it is also possible that centralized goals could be oriented toward equity and justice, and that district administrators have an ethical and democratic responsibility to ensure those goals are met at the school site.

In sum, in terms of scope of authority, SBM may masquerade as a wolf in sheep's clothing. Interpretivist assumptions of the importance of individual, contextually-based constructions of school practice, and critical notions of empowerment and emancipation may simply be a mask for a continuation of functionalist practices that subjugate the beliefs of one group or individual to those of another. Indeed, in a recent review of SBM research, Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz (1991) conclude that not only does SBM fail to alter traditional governing relationships, it can serve to reinforce the existing hierarchy. Scrutinizing the critical theory paradigm perspective of evaluation and district/school control, however, turns scope of authority on its head, questioning whether district control could be warranted when district goals pivot around equity and justice.

Scope of Involvement: Probing Further

Scope of involvement in SBM emanates from the assumption that educational stakeholders will put forth greater efforts, perform better, and "buy into" organizational goals and purpose if they have been integrally involved in making organizational decisions. The paradigmatic basis for this site-based management

assumption is dependent on which of the four philosophies (previously described) is implemented: principal centered, teacher centered, teacher/patron centered, or parity.

Site-base management structures in which the principal retains discretion over site decisions, although decentralizing decisions one level, does little to alter functionalist-based assumptions of hierarchical power relationships. Involvement structures that include teachers and/or parents and those that involve parity between teachers, parents, and principals are based in assumptions from the interpretivist and critical paradigms. The literature suggests, however, that increased involvement, does not necessarily signal critically oriented change. In a report of site-based management in Salt Lake City (Malen & Ogawa, 1988), even when the site council was not formally principal centered, decisions continued to be made by principals with only minimal influence by site councils. For example, teachers expressed beliefs such as, "'Few challenge the principal's authority.' 'You take the principals lead, After all, [s/he's] the boss.'" (p. 261; brackets in original). Parents noted, "'You listen to the principal. After all [s/he] runs the place' (p. 258). Principals described the site councils as, "channels for dispensing information, moderating criticisms, and garnering support, not as arenas for redefining roles, sharing power, and making policy" (p. 259).

Under teacher-centered involvement, if the reason teachers "perform better" under site-based management is because greater involvement in school decisions has stimulated them to study classroom and/or school practice more carefully and reflectively with one another, then this position of scope of involvement journeys out of the functionalist paradigm into the interpretivist paradigm. Stimulation to more carefully critique classroom practice because of involvement in school-level decisions may occur due to a realization of the interaction and desired congruency between classroom and over-all school practice; stimulation to critique school practice may occur due to the development of a sense of collective responsibility for all students (Hill & Bonan, 1991; Reitzug & Burrello, 1992). The paradigm grounding of teachers' critique is dependent on whether its substance is epistemological (i.e., examines how students, teachers, and administrators come to know) or political (i.e., deconstructs how policies and practices disenfranchise some groups or individuals and empowers others).[4] In the former case, the objective is refinement of the status quo and thus based in the "sociology of regulation" and the interpretivist paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 18). In the latter case empowerment is intended to alleviate dominance relationships and thus is based in the "sociology of radical change" and the critical paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 18).

Moving along the involvement continuum from principal-centered to teacher-centered to parity involvement, simply because SBM may formally establish a parity relationship indicative of the critical theory paradigm, does not mean that parity exists in actual practice. For example, Blase (in press), in a large scale study of schools with participative decision-making structures found that, "Even when participatory structures exist . . . principals frequently make the critical decisions related to defining goals, problems, and topics, as well as courses of action to be taken." Similarly, Malen and Ogawa (1988), found that in Salt Lake City, even though a formal parity relationship involving parents, teachers, and principals existed, principals frequently controlled the partnerships. They observed that principals "controlled through very routine actions the agenda content" (p. 262) of site councils; frequently set meeting times for "confined time frames" (p. 262) such as before school and, followed a "'top down' presentation of information" (p. 262) during meetings which resulted in the expiration of available time prior to discussion of substantive issues teachers or parents wished to address. Additionally, teachers felt constrained from raising substantive issues by an unwillingness to be "'labeled' as a 'troublemaker', coming across as 'unpleasant' and 'argumentative'" (p. 261). Parents felt unqualified to fully participate due to a perceived lack of knowledge, and ambiguity about the extent of their power. Both

teachers and parents felt deferential to principals' perceived superior informational data base and knowledge of school administrative processes.

Malen and Ogawa (1988) also observed that both teachers and parents were inhibited by "norms of propriety and civility" (p. 264) which discouraged conflict, encouraged consensus, and were especially prevalent in the Mormon culture of the area. Anderson (1991) has similarly documented the promotion by principals of a "language of harmony and consensus" (p. 127), and classified it as a form of cognitive politics" that is used to symbolically manage the meanings individuals construct about the school and their role in it. Similarly, Hargreaves (1991) has observed that "the 'symbols of power' [and] . . . the mechanics of leadership may change, but ultimately control of the organization is vested in 'strong leaders'; leaders who are the architects of their organizations' vision" (p. 6).

Involvement and change. From the critical theory paradigm, a lack of diversity of participating members may also be responsible for the absence of significant change in SBM projects. For example in the Malen and Ogawa (1988) study, although the "sample of schools. . . included economically and ethnically divergent populations" (p. 259), site councils consisted of demographically and culturally similar members. Teachers on site councils were primarily Caucasian and most had spent their careers in the district; parent members were "with

rare exception, Caucasian, middle-class, well-educated women" (p. 259), and, principals were all Caucasians who had previously served as teachers or counselors in the district. Relatedly, Hargreaves (1991b) has noted

> ... teachers' beliefs and practices are grounded not only in expertise and altruism, but also in structures and routines to which they have become attached and in which considerable self-interest may be invested (p. 27).

Given the dominance of the functionalist paradigm in research and training (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Gioia & Pitre, 1990) and, the vested interests of educators, from where will critical perspectives that challenge taken-for-granted assumptions of schooling come? Is it not possible that educators, who are part of a profession that is primarily white and middle class, are as likely as local, state, and national policy makers to embrace perspectives of schooling that are free-market oriented to the exclusion of perspectives dealing with equity, justice, and social conditions? Hargreaves wondered how we can avoid "a cacophony of voices of undistinguished moral validity...a world in which the decision-making power invested in school cultures is arbitrarily shaped by the inertia of historical tradition and ingrained interest" (p. 28-29)?

If change does occur as a result of the increased scope of involvement in site-based management, new practice, however, may be no more emancipating or just than previous practice. For

example, a subtler dominance relationship may simply be substituted for a more direct one or, one inequitable policy may be replaced with a different inequitable policy. As Quantz, Cambron-McCabe, and Dantley (1991) point out, using democratic processes by including various stakeholders neither guarantees nor justifies undemocratic ends. Hargreaves (1991b) echoes this sentiment noting that, "Voices need to be not only heard, but also engaged, reconciled and argued with. It is important to attend not only to the aesthetic of articulating [stakeholder] voices, but also to the ethics of what those voices articulate" (p. 14).

Expanding the scope of involvement could also result in an improvement over previous practice, whose net effect amounts to no more than tinkering with the status quo. For example, a discipline policy that is more equitable for all student groups may be implemented, but there may be no increased insight on the part of teachers or students about how complying with certain acceptable school behaviors disenfranchises students from their cultural group (see e.g., Willis, 1977). Depending on one's paradigm orientation, one person's perception of "significant" change may be another person's perception of triviality.

In sum, scope of involvement of site-based management can be positioned along a continuum from functionalist, principal centered involvement to critical theory concerns of parity. The research suggests, however, that regardless of the degree of

involvement, principals typically retain control, and parity does not guarantee social change.

Scope of Influence: Probing Further

Even if the scope of authority of the site council was one where any represented group had veto power, and the scope of involvement aligned with parity on the site council, the scope of influence could be minimal. Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz (1991) report that typically, school-site councils "developed discipline handbooks, sponsored student recognition assemblies, launched fund drives, made facility improvements, set up tutorial sessions, . . . discussed instructional strategies (p. 299), set times for parent conferences, adjusted school schedules, determined how reduction in work force directions might be implemented, or how utility costs might be reduced" (p. 305). With few exceptions, ". . . school councils rarely address[ed] central salient issues. . . teachers and parents frequently characteriz[ed] the subjects councils consider[ed] as 'routine,' 'blase', 'trivial,' and 'peripheral'" (p. 305). Moreover, involvement in these tangential decisions most frequently consisted of "listening," "advising," and "rubber stamping."

Other analyses of site-based management initiatives (Hill & Bonan, 1991; Kirby, 1992) found that initial issues addressed by teachers involved in shared decision making focused on working conditions such as the allocation of parking spaces, telephone

availability, and hall and playground duty. Only over time did discussed issues move from "concerns about restrooms" to "more significant...concerns about classrooms" (Kirby, 1992, p. 341). These seemingly insignificant "minor faculty concerns" (Kirby, 1992, p. 341) may be very significant. Not having access to a telephone in a location where private conversations can be conducted, being unable to fulfill essential biological functions as needed, having more daily work time assigned to babysitting duties than to reflection about teaching practice, all serve to demean and dehumanize teachers.

The literature also suggests that even when budget, personnel, and program were included in site council discussions, issues that were appropriate for site council discussion remained subject to traditional beliefs. Malen and Ogawa (1988) noted that in Salt Lake City, both teachers and principals viewed budget and personnel matters as the domain of the principal and felt that, "most school issues fall 'outside the expertise of parents' that parents would, 'stir up problems that don't really need to be addressed' (p. 262)." Thus, beliefs reflected assumptions grounded in traditional forms of school governance that issues belong to specific stakeholders. This is opposed to recognizing the interrelationship of school issues with each other and the collective responsibility and stake that all groups (i.e., teachers, parents, principals) have for what occurs within the areas of budget, personnel, and program.

From a critical theory perspective, lacking from conceptual discussions of site-based management as well as from research reports of SBM initiatives concerning scope of influence is any mention of issues of equity and justice: how classroom and school policies and practices differentially effect various student groups, whose interests are served by policies and practices, what cultural perspective textbook knowledge presents, and a host of other issues that critical theorists have identified as inequitable or hegemonous. Rather recent reports equate "issues of greater significance" with "school improvement or instructional improvement" (Kirby, 1992, p. 341-342) and, "improve[ing] services to students" (Hill & Bonan, 1992, p. 27). In the rare instances when decisions concerned instruction, teachers rarely implemented these decisions in their classrooms (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1991; Weis, 1992). While instructional improvement is a laudable objective related to scope of influence, and moves SBM beyond a narrow focus on working conditions, SBM literature neither mentions nor implies that examination of equity and justice in the context of race, gender, class, or other conditions of disenfranchisement may be an issue. Thus, critical theory as it relates to student issues is noticeably absent in current discussions of scope of influence within site-based management.

In sum, while scope of influence under SBM may be expanded beyond functionalist decisions related to suggestions for PTO

fundraisers, and the arenas for decision-making expanded beyond meetings for special education placement or athletic booster events, the "new" areas of influence seem entrenched in the functionalist paradigm. Not only are core decisions within the areas of budget, personnel, and program rarely made by site-council participants, the SBM literature and the critiques of this literature fail to address decisions within these arenas grounded in critical theory concerns of equity and justice. Similar to the other two continua--scope of authority and scope of involvement--while possibilities exist for critically based decision-making--policy making, research and practice have yet to consider this paradigm perspective.

Recommendations

Based on this analysis, many recommendations could be considered for those considering implementing site-based management; we identify here a few of the most salient ones. We begin with general recommendations, then make specific recommendations for each of the three continua of SBM.

First, a district and school's context should be analyzed before SBM implementation; SBM may not be a good idea for all districts (Scheurich, 1992). Due to lack of commitment on the part of teachers, principal, central office, or due to factors cited by Scheurich, such as student transience, SBM may be an inappropriate intervention for some sites. Consequently, sites

may decide SBM is an inappropriate response for their site and opt to cancel its implementation.

Relatedly, initial SBM meetings should involve a critical deconstruction of the reasons for which SBM is being implemented (e.g., diffusion of criticism, legitimation, or student achievement), and how interests of various stakeholders are served by its implementation. Discussions should clarify where, along the continuum of scope of authority, scope of involvement, or scope of influence, participants wish to position the project.

If individuals decide that SBM is a viable alternative for the districts and schools involved, participants need to consider the goal of SBM. To what extent is the goal of SBM oriented toward social change, equity, and justice, and what are the roles of learning and teaching in this goal? Moreover, the process and product of SBM work should result not only in challenges to institutional practice, but should also cause individual organizational members to critique their personal practice as it relates to how they and their students come to know.

Similarly, issues should be considered from multiple paradigms or "problem screening" criteria should be developed that reflect perspectives grounded in multiple paradigms. Without a mechanism for challenging taken-for-granted policies and practices, the fruits of SBM (even at sites where influence and authority are legitimately decentralized) are, at best, likely to be a more democratic form of business-as-usual.

Recommendations for scope of authority. One of the first considerations for scope of authority involves deliberate discussion regarding district/school tension. Specifically, issues dealing with site evaluation, non-negotiable district outcomes, the use and pursuit of democratic means and ends, and, the role of equity and justice should be addressed. Individual sites will need to grapple with district authorities regarding the extent to which a "bottom line" is established for these concerns.

Administrators will need to be committed to giving up control and legitimatize the professionalism of others. Truly implementing SBM requires a commitment to its parity relationship. Specifically, it involves a recognition that teachers as professionals, and parents as representatives of schools' primary consumers may differ from those in designated leader positions in their interpretation of best practice. As such the initiatives site participants wish to implement may be other than those the central office would prefer to mandate. In instances where principals and central offices are not ready to shed traditional hierarchical authority roles, organizational members are better off under bureaucratic governance than under phony decentralized structures (see Reitzug, 1992).

Moreover, unsuccessful tries should be viewed as local-site learning experiences rather than as opportunities for district sanction. Central office implications that every alteration to

current practice developed via SBM must be successful is unrealistic and likely to create a fear of failure that inhibits innovation. Superintendents and district-level administrators must recognize that not all decisions made by SBM groups will be successful. Similarly, site members must accept the inevitability of unsuccessful tries and contextually analyze these instances to promote increased individual and organizational learning.

In addition, knowledge and data should be decentralized concurrently with formal power structures (Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992). Altering formal governance structures to more fully involve school sites and individuals in decision making only gives the appearance that power has been decentralized. Without providing participants with social, historical, political, and economic contextual knowledge as well as relevant current data, traditional perceptions of principal and district office superiority are simply perpetuated. Training in budgeting, and other technically relevant areas should be provided as appropriate, as should training in group process skills and problem solving [e.g, critical inquiry, (Sirotnik & Oakes, 1986)].

Recommendations for involvement. To date, SBM literature has equated parity with including representatives of the various hierarchical positions on SBM councils (i.e., teachers, parents, and administrators). Although Wohlstetter and Odden (1992)

forcefully advocate for linking SBM to student outcomes, they do not suggest the inclusion of students or school support personnel (e.g., custodial workers)on SBM teams. Moreover, none of the research suggests which teachers and parents should be included. Often, special education teachers are excluded from school restructuring efforts (see Capper, 1991). Similarly, while Ogawa and Malen (1988) lament the appointment of parent representatives by the principal or PTO, they suggest election of parents would take care of the problem. Neither an uncritical appointment process nor an election process, however, guarantee equity issues will be addressed. Election of parents could turn into a popularity contest and would not ensure that the parent members represent the diversity of the school community. Community members, parents, teachers, and students on SBM councils who specifically represent those who typically struggle in school, and who act as advocates for those students are more likely to ensure that these needs are addressed, and not left to chance. Can paradigmatic modifications and restructuring occur when only actors representing paradigms based on the sociology of regulation are represented? We think not.

Resources should also be decentralized so that school sites can purchase teacher time for SBM involvement. Districts and school sites involved in SBM must recognize its systemic nature. Asking already busy teachers to spend significant amounts of time wrestling with school-level decisions will decrease the time they

are able to spend on other aspects of their job (e.g., teaching or counseling students). Decentralizing resources facilitates their redistribution and the possibility that some money will be available to purchase teacher time for SBM work. Without this, SBM is likely to be a trade-off, with teaching effectiveness being compromised at the expense of school governance.

Recommendations for scope of influence. Site-councils will need to focus on budget, program, and personnel, and consider these arenas along the paradigm continuum. Within the parameters of democratic means and ends, school sites should be allowed to determine instructional initiatives and accountability measures. To remain paradigmatically congruent with philosophical assumptions of SBM, the most a district office should do is require that school sites develop instructional initiatives and accountability measures. Their substance, however, should be developed by each site to fit the particular objectives the site hopes to accomplish.

Conclusion

Much of the literature suggests that site-based management could be a vehicle to produce radical change in schools via changes in the scope of authority, scope of involvement, and scope of influence that alleviate dominance relationships of administrators over staff, staff over students, and the differential and inequitable effects of policies and practices

toward those students who typically struggle in school. In doing so, site-based management seems to signal a paradigm shift from a governance structure rooted in functionalist assumptions to a more interpretivist-based structure. Even concerns from critical theory are represented in the potential devolution of authority, expanding participant influence, and increasing the diversity of participants. Surface appearances, however, may not reflect the reality of practice.

Our analysis suggests that assuming that radical change will occur may be assuming far too much. As has been documented in this paper, various potential and actual practices fling site-based management into the land of paradigm indeterminacy. If implemented and practiced in certain ways (e.g., recognizing the worth of contextually-based teacher knowledge), and with certain results (e.g., examination of dominance relationships in schools), it has the potential to represent the interpretivist or critical paradigm. If implemented and practiced in other ways it may simply be a manipulative refinement of the functionalist paradigm.

Ultimately, the paradigm grounding of site-based management, "depends upon who controls it, who is involved in it, and the purposes to which it is to be put" (Hargreaves, 1991, p. 7). If we submit to our functionalist urge to attach a paradigm label to site-based management, the most enlightening judgement that we are able to render is, "It depends...".

Notes

1. More recently, scholars have suggested that the structural functional, interpretive, and critical theory paradigms are all fundamentally grounded in modernism, and have advocated for postmodern/poststructural and feminist poststructural approaches to education (Cherryholmes, 1988; Lather, 1991) and educational administration (Capper, in press). Because of space limitations and because of the depth of issues around the structural functional, interpretive, and critical theory paradigms, we limited our analysis to these three, aiming for depth rather than breadth.

2. From a critical perspective, will "universal standards" and accountability measure concepts and practices such as equity, justice, emancipation, and empowerment, or will they focus only on standardized test data, or uncritical portfolio assessments?

3. Scheurich (1992), for example, speculates that any benefits accrued through site-based management may be negated by high student mobility in urban schools. He argues that the distinctively different schools spawned by SBM may make it a "fatally inappropriate" response in settings where there is frequent movement by students from school to school (p. 7).

4. See Prawat (1991) for a more complete description of epistemological and political critique and empowerment.

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Figure 1: Continua of Site-based Management

SCOPE OF AUTHORITY
(degree of discretion provided)

Structural Functionalist		Interpretivist		Critical Theory
Council Advisory	Principal has veto power	District has veto power; Controls by evaluation	Decision by school-site council binding	Any represented group may veto, council decisions binding

External constraints on scope of authority

Structural Functionalist		Interpretivist	Critical Theory	
Discretion constrained by district initiatives, policies, employee contracts, and federal/ state legislation	Discretion constrained by district policies, contracts, and federal/state legislation	Discretion constrained by federal/state legislation only	Broad latitude: No constraints	

SCOPE OF INVOLVEMENT
(to whom authority is distributed)

Structural Functionalist		Interpretivist	Critical Theory
Principal Centered	Teacher Centered	Teacher and Patron Centered	Parity

SCOPE OF INFLUENCE
(to which issues authority is delegated)

Structural Functionalist		Interpretivist		Critical Theory
Decisions unrelated to budget, personnel, or program	Decisions focused on one or two of the three areas of budget, personnel, program	Decisions focused on all three areas of budget, personnel, and program, but narrowly prescribed	Decisions focused on budget, personnel, and program with broad latitude	All issues considered